

Martin La'a



Class of 2005

Spark Scholar

Bachelor of Arts

Mangere Community, Auckland

Support all the way

First Foundation, is more than a tertiary cheque, It seeks to meet you at a pivotal time during high school, wraps a lot of support around you and walks alongside you through your journey. I'm not sure I would've had the momentum at such an early stage of my career either, had I navigated the journey from high school to adult life on my own.

The right fit

First Foundation opened the very first door and it was the right door for me, At Spark, I have found meaning and purpose in my career. I still feel immensely humbled and honoured that an organisation like Spark, cast an eye on a young Samoan student from South Auckland and saw value in me. Spark has continued to open doors for me, both in career development as well as in external leadership courses.

My whānau is forever changed

I'm in a financially stable position and have enabled my mum to retire early. I support her which has taken the burden off my siblings who have families of their own. We are on track to buy our first family home at the beginning of next year.

2005

First Foundation Scholarship awarded



Graduated from Mangere High School

Studying towards a Bachelor of Arts until Spark offered the opportunity of full time employment



At the age of 24, I was offered the opportunity to manage my very own store

Spark's youngest & first of Samoan descent to land a Regional Manager role, overseeing 8 stores in the South Island, then 16 stores in central North Island

After working for 12 years straight, I travelled to Argentina to volunteer with under privileged children

After a brief stint working for the competition, Spark approached me with a job offer, which to me marked a 14 year cycle, starting with First Foundation

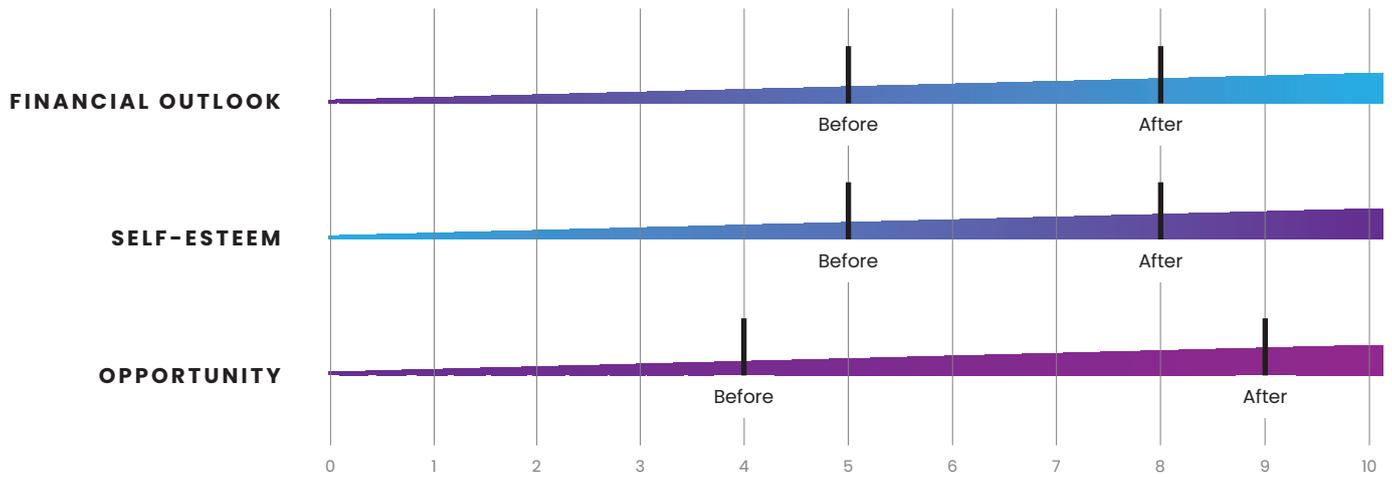
Short term goals - a career in HR and longer term, a step outside of the corporate world to help under privileged children



FUTURE

"It's now about how I can help and serve others and what I can give back to the world"

We asked Susana to measure the change to her sense of wellbeing on a scale of 1 to 10. This compares how she felt before she was granted the First Foundation Scholarship to how she feels now.



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

I have evolved so much as a person, both personally and professionally. I have learnt so many new skills but more importantly for me I have learnt to harness and own, who I am and what I bring to the table naturally.



I was the first in my immediate family to go to university. I have a lot of nieces and nephews now pursuing tertiary studies. University is not elusive – it's a real and a viable option for them! I'm excited about the next generation!

Thinking about what I've been able to give back to my family fills my heart so much. I'll forever live to give back to them.

Made possible with the generous support of



For more stories behind the numbers visit our website

www.firstfoundation.org.nz



@firstfoundation

